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ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is intended to assist supervisors of work-based career training projects in helping students explore the effects of changing circumstances on a turkey farm and use a microcomputer to analyze the results. The guide is one in a series of core curriculum modules that is intended for use in combination on- and off-the-job programs to familiarize youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace. Included in the guide are the following components: notes on computer literacy, project information, a summary of the content and approach of the guide, supervisor's notes, background information, lists of tasks and core skills, an action plan that includes suggested learning activities, supervisor and trainee review sheets, and an assessment form. (KC)

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Youth Training Scheme

CORE EXEMPLAR WORK BASED PROJECT

ED265328

Calculating the profitability of Christmas turkeys using a microcomputer system

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ESF
CORE SKILLS PROJECT
YTS

OTF No: 2

PROJECT No: S|21

TYPE Individual

2

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Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6RG ✆ 0761-62503

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ASSESSMENT OF CORE SKILLS

This series of projects contains a number of different formats for recording assessment of core skills. These formats are offered for experimental purposes, none is proven as the 'best' method. All are based on the principle that feedback to trainees is a necessary part of the learning process and that such feedback should include information on core skill development.

Further work is being carried out on the methods of assessing achievement of core skills in work-based learning and of how to log such achievement on a record which trainees can take away from YTS. Some of the results of this work will be included in later MSC/ESF Core Skills Project publications.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE WORK-BASED PROJECTS?

Work-based projects are learning materials which aim to make the most of all the possibilities for developing trainees' skills, knowledge and attitudes in the workplace. They build upon everyday workplace tasks to provide experience of th whole range of YTS learning opportunities.

The projects in this series have been tested with managing agents as part of the YTS Core Project, which is jointly financed by MSC and the European Social Fund. In some cases managing agents will be able to use the projects as they are. In others they will need to be adapted to the circumstances of a particular workplace or to the aims of a particular scheme. Some managing agents will prefer to produce their own projects. For such cases these examples aim to demonstrate some principles of good design in work-based learning materials. These principles are:

To encourage trainees to learn by doing
To make the most of all the experiences which are available to trainees in the workplaces.
To start from a real task which is seen as relevant by all parties involved — trainees, workplace supervisors, trainers and off-the-job tutors.
To help trainees see the relationships between thing learnt on- and off-the-job.
To base the assessment of achievement upon trainees' actual performance in tasks.
To look for all the opportunities for learning which arise from a task and, in particular, to help trainees to develop the core skills. These skills, in number, communication, problem-solving and practical activities, are used in a wide variety of tasks and are essential if trainees are to achieve competence in those tasks*. They are the skills — of finding out information, planning how to do things, overcoming difficulties and so on — which help trainees to learn more quickly in new situations, either in the same workplace, in a different one, or in the world outside work.

Such skills are required naturally by the workplace tasks in these projects and, in requiring trainees to go beyond the task itself, the projects deliberately *add* to the range of core skills which are required in an everyday working situation. This is especially important for some of the skills of communication and problem-solving which trainees are often not given the opportunity to exercise in work experience.

These principles can be incorporated in projects for all placements and for trainees of all ability levels. Although the projects in this series follow a common format, there is no single 'best' style. Nor is any special expertise in writing necessary. Good work-based projects can be produced by anyone who is determined to help trainees to exploit all of the potential for learning in work experience.

*A technical manual 'Core Skills in YTS' is currently available from MSC. It is supported by a short introductory leaflet and a practitioner's guide for supervisors. A separate manual is available on computer literacy/information technology.

NOTES ON COMPUTER LITERACY

(1) This Project assumes the trainee has some operational and keyboard skills. For example, it is assumed that the trainee can start up the system, use the keyboard, operate peripheral devices, and load files. It also assumes that there has been previous experience of appropriate software.

(2) It is suggested that many of the operational and file handling skills are best acquired in the context of games and personal software applications, and not learned in isolation from hands-on experience. Experience on as wide a range of hardware and software as possible should be provided, to encourage transferability of these skills.

(3) This and related Projects are intended to be used as a means to consolidate and develop these skills, in applications which are relevant to a wide range of Occupational Training Families.

(4) These Projects are generalised - that is, they are not specific to particular hardware or software. They should, therefore, be interpreted and implemented in relation to the systems available.

PROJECT INFORMATION

SUBJECT CHOICE: "PROFITABILITY OF CHRISTMAS TURKEYS USING A MICROCOMPUTER"

This Project is intended to explore the effects of changing circumstances on a turkey fattening enterprise by using a computer to analyse the results.

WHERE IT CAN BE USED/COULD BE USED:

This Project could be used on-the-job if the necessary computer resources are available; or in an off-the-job computer literacy element by using records previously collected on-the-job.

STAGE(S) IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME THE PROJECT WAS/COULD BE USED:

It is not advised that this Project be used as a basic introduction, since it assumes previous knowledge and skill.

LINK UP WITH OTHER WORK-BASED PROJECTS:

The introductory Project "Using a Microcomputer System" could be used before this. Other Projects using a modelling program are "Horticultural Crop Returns Using a Microcomputer", and "Recording Milk Yield".

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

The Project requires the trainee to have had prior experience of hardware and a demonstration of the software appropriate to this task.

ADAPTATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:

The Project is written so that it is not dependent on particular computer hardware. The software used could be a specialist package or an adapted spreadsheet package preferably integrated with a graph-plotting routine.

USE OF THE OFF-THE-JOB TUTOR:

This Project could be completed in the workplace, or in an off-the-job situation using data collected on-the-job.

SUMMARY

This Project asks the trainee to:

- enter data related to the circumstances of a turkey rearing enterprise to produce different effects on profitability, using a spreadsheet program;
- identify optimum conditions and suggest ways of improving the enterprise.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Prior experience of hardware and software is assumed.

SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

The trainees should have had prior experience of the computer system and be aware of how to plug in, switch on and get the system operating. He/she should also know the keyboard controls (escape, break, etc.).

In addition to the spreadsheet control instructions, the trainee will need a set of questions/changes to work on. These would include changes in feed costs, mortality rates, sale prices, etc. This Project could be easily adapted to be used with any crop or livestock enterprise. Please discuss the effects of changes in circumstances with the trainees.

The trainee should be encouraged to relate the changes in the figures to the real world and animal husbandry, - reasons for high mortality, for example.

NAMES

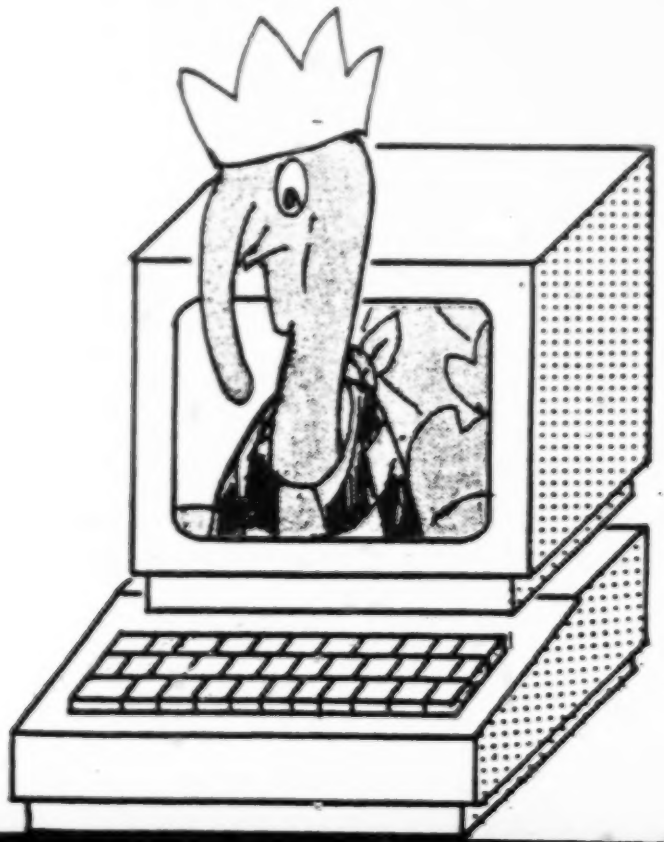
Trainee _____

Supervisor _____

TIMES

Fill in the table below. This will show the time you spend on this Project. The first column has been filled in as an example. Make another table if you need more space.

Date	9/4/84					
Start	9·30					
Finish	12·30					TOTAL
Time Spent	3 hours					



BACKGROUND

A turkey fattening operation can be very profitable but changes in the prices received for the birds at Christmas and the costs of the chicks, feed, etc. can rapidly turn this into a loss. The farmer must try to foresee this and see what can be done to change the position.

SITUATION

Most farmers would have their computer system in the farm office.

PURPOSES

Doing this Project will help you to learn more about your work. It will also help you to develop your Core Skills (Number, Communication, Problem Solving, Practical and Computer Literacy Skills). Increasing your competence in these skills will make it easier to learn new work skills, change jobs, and retrain when the need arises.

The activities that you will be asked to carry out are list below, along with the main Core Skills that they contain. These Core Skills are also listed on the "Project Record " Form at the end of the Action Plan and your Supervisor should assess your achievements in these skills as you complete the Project. This record will be needed to complete your Certificate at the end of your YTS Year.

To help you to:	Core Skills:
start up, operate and close down a microcomputer system	12.6 carry out start up procedures 13.4 operate and control equipment 14.1 carry out procedures to turn off equipment
interpret diagrams and data showing profit calculations	2.1 interpret numerical data or symbols in written or printed form
decide on which are the best profit making circumstances	10.3 decide between alternative courses of action
follow appropriate safety procedures	13.1 adopt safe working practices
use a spreadsheet program to look at profits	C.L. use a modelling package
handle magnetic files	C.L. load and save magnetic files
print out profit diagrams and data	C.L. produce printed output

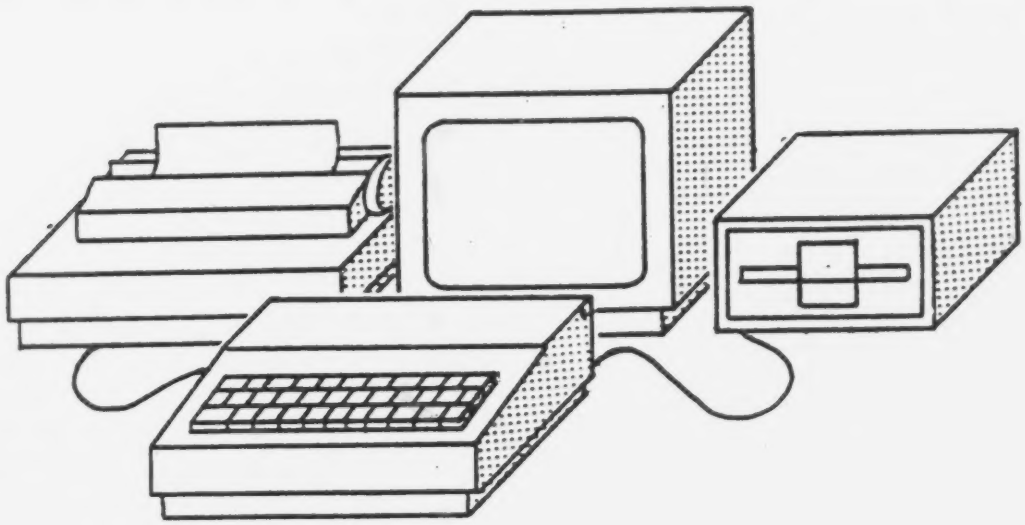
Please read the questions asked in the Trainee Review Section.

ACTION PLAN

4

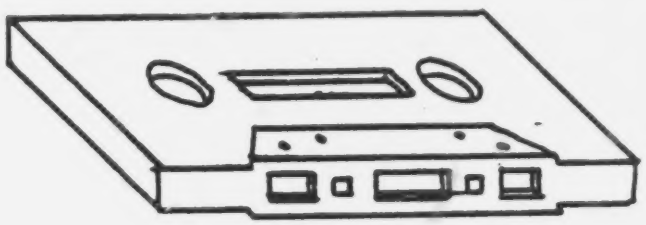
Read through this Action Plan carefully before you start.

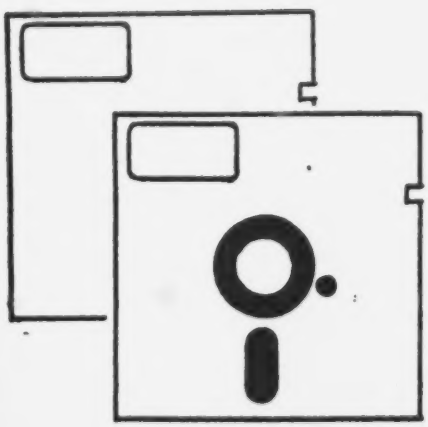
Make sure you know which equiment, magnetic files and stationery to use. Ask your Supervisor for help if you need to.



USING THE SPREADSHEET

Load the software and the data file. You will be given specific instructions for your system.





The program will display a "profit calculation" for the turkey rearing enterprise.

You will be given a list of changes in the circumstances of the enterprise - such as changes in feed costs, increased deaths etc.

- Change the spreadsheet to include these new circumstances, and note the effects they have on the final profit.
- Obtain a print-out of the situation with the changes in. Check that the stationery is correctly loaded. Give the correct command to the system to obtain a print-out of the gross margin.
- Make changes that you think would result in the biggest profit. Make these one by one on the screen, keeping an eye on the profit.
- When you have got the best possible list of circumstances, take a print-out.
- Suggest on a sheet of paper what the farmer would need to do to ensure that your changes in circumstances would happen. For example he might reduce feed costs by buying in bulk.

Show all the results to your Supervisor, and discuss them with him/her.

FINISHING 6

Check that - equipment is left in a safe condition

magnetic files and stationery are returned to storage.

DEVELOPMENT

Can you suggest any other ways a "Spreadsheet" type program could help when doing farm calculating?

BEFORE YOU START

How long do you think it will take to carry out this Action Plan?

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED

How long did it take to carry out the Action Plan?

Was this more/less than you estimated?

Why?

TRAINEE REVIEW

These questions may help you to decide what to write.

What did you learn? Remember the PURPOSES or things that you could learn are listed on Page 3.

Were any parts of the Action Plan too difficult? Which ones? What did you do?

Were any parts too easy? Which ones?

What was the most interesting part of the Action Plan and why?

How could you follow up this Project? Does it connect with other Projects that you have done?

How could you use what you have learned in this Project in the future?

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

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Please refer to Supervisor's Notes

Please read the questions included under Trainee Review.

Please complete the Project Record Form and discuss your assessment with the trainee before initialling it to show that you both agree with the assessment.

COMMENTS:

PROJECT RECORD I

PROJECT TITLE PROFITABILITY OF CHRISTMAS TURKEYS USING A MICROCOMPUTER WBP NO S/56 DATE

TRAINEE'S NAME SUPERVISOR'S NAME

WORK BASED PROJECT		NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE	NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE	LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE		FURTHER TRAINING NEEDED	COMMENTS INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY	AGREED INITIALS	
TASK NO	CORE SKILLS ASSESSED			NEEDS MORE PRACTICE	COMPETENT			TRAINEE	SUPERVISOR
	starting up a microcomputer system 12.6								
	operating a microcomputer system 13.4								
	closing down a microcomputer system 14.1								
	interpreting numberical data or symbols showing profit calculations 2.1								
	deciding between alternative courses of action to improve profit 10.3								
	Using a modelling package C.L.								
	Loading and saving magnetic files C.L.								
	Producing printed output C.L.								

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